

The Cheerful Letter

EVERY PLACE A CHURCH; EVERY DAY THE LORD'S DAY; ALL EVENTS BLESSINGS; ALL JOY
THANKSGIVING; AND ALL NATURE AND LIFE FULL OF GOD.—*James Freeman Clarke.*

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No. 2

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JOY IN THE WORKS OF GOD.

"Thou, Lord, hast made me glad through thy work; I will triumph in the works of thy hands."

Not, Lord, its own dear joys alone
This heart to rapture raise;
The grace which seemeth most my own
Employs not all my praise.

Each wonder of thy hand still makes
My gladness sweet and strong;
The glory of my God still wakes
The glory of my song.

I walk amidst thy beauty forth,
My joy thy praise declares;
I bless thee with thy blooming earth,
I drink thy vernal airs.

Those old eternal hills of thine,
What mighty cheer they breathe!
What fulness of delight divine
Thy solemn stars bequeath!

When cheer and strength my soul doth lack,
Thy glory makes me whole:
Amidst thy summer I win back
The summer of my soul.

How bright thy footsteps through all time,
Thy wonders from of yore!
I follow with a joy sublime:
My rapture runneth o'er.

Not only in thy blessed Son
My Saviour dear I see,
Nor in thy gospel greet alone
Thy wondrous grace to me.

Lord! still will I triumphant greet
Each wonder of thy grace;
But then my joy will be complete
When I behold thy face.

—T. H. Gill.

INCREASE OF LIFE.

"Because I live, ye shall live also."—JOHN xiv. 19.

To Jesus Christ the unseen world and the world which is seen are one world and the same. We talk of "the other world," "the future world," "the world above": he does not speak so. He speaks of heaven as if it were now and here, or might be; and, when we are confused with what he says, it is often because we see double where he sees singly. Nay: when he appears to be confused by what they say,—as sometimes happens,—the best account we can give is that they are talking of this visible world only, while he talks at once of the visible and invisible. There are a hundred texts which show his feeling,—*"Lo! I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world."* "It is my Father who doeth these things at which you wonder. You do not see him; but, all the same, he is here." "Father, I know that thou hearest me always. I would not have spoken aloud but for the help of these who are standing by." And, when he expresses his trouble because language and metaphor fail him as they do, it is in this very difficulty. Language, having been made by people who rely on their senses to answer the purposes of the visible and tangible world, breaks down, and breaks down very badly, when it is applied to the range, vastly wider, of that unseen world which permeates this world, and in which this world floats as a straw floats in the ocean.

Film by film, shred by shred, this child of God lays off one and another of the environments which fetter him. The baby is not held longer in his mother's arms: he totters alone. At last he is master of the house, and may roam where he will. Nay, the day comes when the doubtful mother must let him run outdoors under his own control. He grows to youth or manhood, and makes his own home. Not even orders from father

or mother rule him longer. Perhaps he passes from land to land, acquires the sway of new languages, and is not bound even to one country. Perhaps his word controls other men. What he writes is read by all thinkers, what he thinks is applied in all laws. Perhaps he startles a generation of sleepers, and they take up their beds and walk. All this steady enlargement of life and power is certain, because he is God's child. The soul in him controls the organic frame of an earthly tabernacle. One step more, and the sweet singer, who yesterday wrote some psalm of praise for a few companions, casts off this earthly house of a mortal tabernacle, and joins in the chorus of a nobler and larger worship.

The careful reasoner, who with the little tricks of two or three earthly algebras untangled the problems of the universe, drops off the house of an earthly tabernacle, sees as he is seen and knows as he is known, and rejoices in the untangled heavenly verities. The faithful friend, who let no hour pass unless he had ministered to this orphan, had braced up yonder hesitant, had lifted him who has fallen, or comforted her who was starving, casts off this frail house of an earthly tabernacle; and, lo! infinite resource with which to minister, no lack of time for endeavor, and no grinding burden of fatigue. She who for months and years lay gently on the sick-bed, who received from one and another a thousand tender ministrations to her pain, and repaid them all in her thankful patience,—she casts off this frail house of this earthly tabernacle; and, lo! with the same love, with the same patience, with the same gratitude, she is ministering to them and to ten thousand more in this glad freedom of disembodied life. As the baby passes into the boy, the boy into the youth, the youth into the man, so in one more change, not unlike these others, the child of God stands free in the untrammelled life of heaven.

The revelation of life in Jesus Christ is not simply the fact of his personal reappearance after death. Before he died, he had quickened the life of the world, renewed it, enlarged it. "I am the resurrection and the life: whoso liveth and believeth in me shall never die." Whoever lives with that control of sense and organ by the living soul which to the Christian man is possible,

whoever rises superior to pain, hunger, want, whoever lives with the divine life of a son of God, that man knows he does not die. The answer falls fitly on the wretched plaint of Martha, dissatisfied, as well she might be, with the faith of her country and of her time. She sobs out her doleful creed, "I know that he shall rise again at that distant resurrection, at that last day, which is, oh, so wretchedly far away!" How often has that mournful plaint of that Jewish woman been repeated by persons who have been taught the same Eastern doctrine of a suspended animation, even in Christian churches! Christ will have none of it. "Dead! do you think I shall die? You believe in me! Do you think any child of God dies? If he once learns to live, if he live in the large life,—the life that believes, that loves, that hopes,—he knows he cannot die."

It is indeed a faith which it needs such as Jesus to instil. Those who knew him took it in, and made it real. For us, we drink at the same fountain. The promise was not an empty promise; and when the moment comes, when the cloud opens and the heaven reveals itself, the Comforter, who is the Holy Spirit, speaks to us. Nor is it any new doctrine. It is the word which spoke from the beginning. The Comforter speaks to say that the world of God is larger than this world of man. The life of God is larger than this life, hemmed in by the powers of the senses only, and unable to know more or to do more. The Father of perfect love is always training us for that larger life and those fuller powers. Sometimes he shows us that this is possible. When he calls the careful thinker who has exhausted earthly processes, or the brave leader who has quickened a thousand thousand lives, nay, the loving boy who has shown me what the kingdom of heaven is and what it is like, or the unselfish mother whose life has been all made up of help and blessing to those around her,—when God lifts these into a life unembodied, and therefore unseen, he teaches me again the lesson which Jesus was teaching always. Such lives have larger sphere and duty; for God's purpose is larger than these cramped places and these passing hours. Who lives as they have lived, and with such faith as their faith, these never die.—*Edward Everett Hale.*

THE STILL HOUR.

LOOKING UNTO GOD.

"God's hand in all things, and all things in God's hand."

I look to Thee in every need,
And never look in vain;
I feel thy touch, Eternal Love,
And all is well again.
The thought of thee is mightier far
Than sin and pain and sorrow are.

Discouraged in the work of life,
Disheartened by its load,
Shamed by its failures or its fears,
I sink beside the road;
But let me only think of thee,
And then new heart springs up in me.

Thy calmness bends serene above,
My restlessness to still.
Around me flows thy quickening life
To nerve my faltering will;
Thy presence fills my solitude;
Thy providence turns all to good.

Embosomed deep in thy dear love,
Held in thy law, I stand;
Thy hand in all things I behold,
And all things in thy hand;
Thou leadest me by unsought ways,
And turn'st my mourning into praise.
—S. Longfellow.

SUNSET.

In this calm, beautiful hour, the Sabbath hour of the day, I turn to thee, my Father, the Lord of Peace, the Giver of Rest, the Author of all things beautiful and good. Thou needest not my thanks, O bounteous God; but my soul needs to rehearse thy blessings and to praise thine infinite loving-kindness.

While the twilight fades in the west, and the birds nestle in the branches, and the hush of the night passes over the sleeping woods, and the stars come out in the sky, I would enter like a worshipper into this thy holy temple of nature, and lift to thee, O Lord of All, the orison of my humble praise.

I bless thee, O God, for the life thou hast given me, for the great boon of existence in the universe of which thou art King.

For such measure of health and strength as I possess, for hearing and sight, for food and clothing, and abode and sleep.

I bless thee for the friends yet near me, and for the dear ones who have gone home to thee; for their tender love, and for the happy power to love and honor them in return.

For the nearest and dearest friend of all; for the joy of that love which thou alone hast fully known and understood.

For the power to relieve the wants of others, to mitigate some of their sorrows and right a portion of their wrongs.

I bless thee that thy mercies are not for me alone, but are spread over all thy creatures, and that there are thousands who possess joys which are denied to me, and happiness which I shall never share.

I bless thee for the order of thy beautiful world; for sun and moon and stars and sea; for clouds and mountains and running waters.

For the fruits of the summer and the autumn's store; for winter's frost and the ever-renewing miracle of spring; for brilliant day and holy night and soft, sweet twilight.

For the stately trees of the forest, and for the flowers which bloom over all the earth like tokens to show that thy love is everywhere.

For the sweet singing birds and the loving and faithful brutes whom thou hast made our humble friends; for all the creatures which fill earth and air and sea with their innocent happiness.

I bless thee for the special gifts thou hast given to the race of man; for speech and writing, whereby the souls of the living and the dead commune together; for science and art and poetry.

For the inspiration wherewith thou hast enlightened all the good and wise of every age and clime, and which thou didst pour in fullest measure through the soul of Christ when he learned to call thee Father.

For the blissful throb of gladness when I have obeyed thy voice of Conscience; for the joyless void when I have been deaf to its mandates; for the bitter anguish of remorse when I have defied and disobeyed it.

For every joy which brought me to thy feet in gratitude; for every pang which taught me the loathsomeness of sin.

For thy myriad gifts I bless thee! But, above all others, for this,—that thou hast taught me to know thee, and that I can trace thy blessed hand in all things good and beautiful.

I bless thee that I know thou lovest all the millions of thy creatures who fill the stars with their joy and with thy glory.

I bless thee for the dearest of all gifts of time or of Eternity. I bless thee that with my mind I know and with my heart I feel that thou, my God, art good.

THE BIBLE CLASS.

John was the son of a priest; and his parents were honorable people, and respected by those who knew them. Of John's childhood we know even less than of that of Jesus. He comes before us in the fifteenth year of Tiberius Cæsar, a stern ascetic, prepared for his high mission by long, solitary self-communion in the desert, by prayer and fasting. The raiment of skins and the hermit's fare were regarded as the attributes of a prophet. Thus was Elijah clad, and thus he fared.

Notice at this stage how one or two charges of inaccuracy in the gospel story have melted away under a better knowledge of history. As there was a Lysanias who had reigned during the life of Antony and Cleopatra, and who is mentioned by Josephus, it has been assumed by such writers as Strauss and Keim that the mention of a Lysanias by Luke is a proof of the unhistorical character of the Gospel. It is now known that besides the Lysanias of Josephus there was another, who governed Abilene at the time of Christ. (See Smith's Bible Dictionary, article *Lysanias*, by Howson, with reference to other students. Also Edersheim, "Life and Times of Jesus," who refers to Wieseler and Schürer.) For the historical background, see Estlin Carpenter's "Life in Palestine when Jesus lived."

The scene of John's first public appearance was in the "wilderness of Judea"; that is, the wild, desolate country about the mouth of the Jordan. But his ministrations were not restricted to that region. (See Luke iii. 3.) It has been suggested that John was an Essene; but this is declared quite impossible by Lightfoot, since the Essenes were not allowed animal food, and John would thus have been prevented from eating locusts.

John's preaching was of a moral character, a call to repentance and to an upright life. An interesting feature is that it was so pervaded by expressions and images drawn from the prophet Isaiah's writings. It is worth while to trace this. Keim has pointed out the expressions: "generation of vipers," Isa. lix. 5; "planting of the Lord," v. 7; "trees," vi. 13, x. 15, 18, 33, xl. 24; "fire," i. 31, ix. 18, x. 17, v. 24, xlvii. 14; "floor and fan," xxi. 10, xxviii. 27, etc., xxx. 24, xl. 24,

xli., etc.; "bread and coat to the poor," lviii. 7; "the garner," xxi. 10. Notice also the image of the lamb applied to Jesus in John.

Mark's expression "all the land of Judea" has been thought an exaggeration; but it has now been shown that this was the *Judean year*. Business was suspended, and great numbers of people were living in tents and booths, leading, in fact, a sort of camp-meeting life.

It is thought that John began his preaching and baptizing near the mouth of the Jordan, and went slowly northward, along the east bank of the river, through a wide tract of country, until he reached Bethabara near the southern part of the Sea of Galilee about twenty miles from Nazareth, and the same distance from Cana. Here was a ford, and the shallow water made it a good place for John to baptize his disciples. The ford still remains, and has been identified by Conder.

Now follows the baptism of Jesus, which we must reserve for a special lesson, noting only that it was then first revealed to John that in Jesus he saw the fulfilment of the prayers, the long-expected Messiah of the Jews.

"Thy kingdom come." The coming of the kingdom of heaven, the message of John, the work of Christ, had filled the heart of the prayers of John and of Jesus for many years. It was not strange that that moment of prayer and self-consecration should have been the moment of revelation.

After this comes the visit of the deputation from Jerusalem. How easy it would have been for John at the height of his popularity, and with the Jews ready to accept his leadership, to have taken the chief place in the religious reform just beginning, and how simply and nobly he set the tempter aside! "I am not the Christ." "Art thou Elias?" "I am not." "Art thou that prophet?" "No." (See Deut. xviii. 15-18.) "Who art thou? What sayest thou of thyself?" "I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness." We can see the thought arising in John's mind. "I am no Messiah, no prophet. Elias come again. I am only a voice. My work is only to prepare the way for the great expected one: then I shall fade away and be forgotten." And he speaks with his favorite Isaiah imagery: "I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness."

one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord."

Jesus had now left the wilderness, and the next day John saw him "coming unto him." And, his mind still filled with the Isaiah images, the expressions of Isaiah came naturally to his lips. "Behold the Lamb of God!" he said, speaking to those who stood near. Note here that John, the evangelist, who tells the story, is one of the disciples of John the Baptist; and the minuteness and accuracy of the narrative is that of a hearer and eye-witness. He tells us that John the Baptist used these words "the next day" after the visit of the men from Jerusalem, and records the rest of what John said of Jesus. "And *again the next day* after John stood, and *two* of his disciples; and, looking upon Jesus as he walked, he saith, Behold the Lamb of God!" And the two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus.

John, the evangelist, was one of these two; Andrew, Peter's brother, the other. It was the Sabbath, and they spent the whole day with Jesus. Did they return to John the Baptist in the evening, to tell him what had passed during those blessed hours?

Notice that the *tenth hour* means the tenth according to Roman reckoning,—ten o'clock in the morning.

The next scene is the strikingly characteristic conversation in the third chapter of John. Perhaps the evangelist was with the Baptist on this occasion, for he has given the report with lifelike accuracy. "Master, he that was with thee beyond Jordan," etc., "the same baptizeth; and all men come unto him!"

How natural the petty jealousy of the followers of John! How noble the magnanimity of the great-souled prophet! Hear him:—

"A man can receive nothing except it be given him from heaven."

The power of Jesus is a gift from God. Shall we deny his right or seek to impede his work?

"Ye yourselves bear me witness that I said, I am not the Christ, but that I am sent before him."

John was, in his own mind, like the sympathizing friend of the happy bridegroom at a wedding. Was he to think of himself and of foolish rivalry, when the one great hope

and desire of his life was accomplished? This was the very thing he had always longed for. "This, therefore, my joy is FULFILLED."

"He must increase, and I must decrease." Is there a touch of sadness here, one minor note in the joyous thanksgiving? We would rather think that it is not so. John saw his own work done, and could now rest with the sense of fulfilment. There can be no greater happiness for a reformer than to see the work to which he has devoted himself in the hands of one who will develop it worthily.

It was inevitable that a man of John's character should sooner or later come into collision with the ruler of the country, the weak, unscrupulous Herod Antipas. Reproving Herod boldly for his sins, as Elijah of old reproved Ahab, he suffered the natural result of his uncompromising sternness. Herod imprisoned John; though the story tells us he sometimes sent for John, and enjoyed listening to him. It was during this imprisonment that John sent two of his disciples to Jesus, with the message, "Art thou he that should come? or do we look for another?"

Readers of the New Testament have found a difficulty here. As John had before this time called Jesus the Messiah, why should he now send to ask him this question? Perhaps we should say have *made* a difficulty, for the objection comes from our dull and unimaginative way of reading. History can never be properly understood without the aid of the imagination, New Testament history least of all.

John was in prison: the confinement of such a life, hard enough to any one, was peculiarly so to a man of John's eager, active mind, and accustomed to the free life of the desert. His whole heart now turns longingly toward Jesus. When will the Messiah openly assume his office? When will he lead his nation to victory, and drive out the hated Romans and the cruel, time-serving Herod? John, unable now to act himself, waits impatiently for the consummation. But John had never perfectly understood Jesus: he, John, still belonged to the old dispensation,—the dispensation of power, of official authority, of outward victory. The ideas of Jesus were beyond his ken,—forgiveness to the Romans; a spiritual conquest, through a higher, purer form

of religion; Gentiles made equal with Jews. Is it strange that John did not understand this? How many of Christ's so-called disciples understand it at the present day?

So that fiery spirit, fretting within the prison-walls, hears of him to whom he looked as the conqueror of the foes of Israel, and the leader of her armies, wandering peacefully through the land of Galilee, preaching, healing sick people, telling little stories, dining with Pharisees and with publicans, going to Jerusalem to keep the Passover. John could endure it no longer. He had not hesitated to rebuke the king on his throne: he would not now fear to send a message that would remind Jesus how he was wasting time, and injuring the cause by this inexplicable delay.

The disciples of John arrived, and found Jesus in the midst of a listening group. The reproof probably lost none of its harshness in the transmission, and was evidently delivered in public, possibly interrupting what Jesus was saying. The messengers broke into the little group of reverent and eager listeners with the abrupt words,—

"John Baptist hath sent us unto thee, saying, Art thou he that should come? or look we for another?"

We have led the way, step by step, to this question, to show that it is not categorical, but sarcastic. The inner meaning is evidently: "Rouse yourself! Be about your work! Let not the opportunity pass. We have looked to you. Do we look in vain? Must we seek another leader, another Messiah?"

Great must have been the displeasure of the disciples of Jesus to hear their master thus roughly assailed.

What will be the answer of Jesus to this insulting language?

"In that same hour he cured many of their infirmities and plagues, and of evil spirits; and unto many that were blind he gave sight."

"Then" (after the disciples of John had witnessed these cures) he sends the never-to-be-forgotten answer: "Go your way, and tell John what things ye have seen and heard: how that the blind see; the lame walk; the lepers are cleansed; the deaf hear; the dead are raised [in Luke the passage follows the story of the raising of the widow's son]; to the poor the gospel is preached."

These are the very words of the prophet Isaiah, John's own favorite prophet, whose thoughts and phrases are ever on his lips. But what more? Not "alas! for him who loses faith," but—

"And blessed is he whosoever shall not be offended in me," or, more closely translated in the revised version:—

"Blessed is he whosoever shall find none occasion of stumbling in me." (See Isa. viii. 14: "He shall be for a sanctuary; but for a stone of stumbling and for a rock of offence to both the houses of Israel.")

As if Jesus had said, "Are you John, you who first recognized me as the Messiah, willing to be one of those who find in him, as Isaiah says, only 'a stone of stumbling and a rock of offence'? and that when I am fulfilling the very words of the prophet, in his description of the Messiah?"

The messengers now depart, and Jesus turns to soothe the irritation of his own followers.

"What went ye out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken with the wind? But what went ye out to see? A man clothed in soft raiment? No; they which are in gorgeous apparel do so; but he that liveth delicately."

"Ye went out to see? A prophet? Yea, I say unto you, and much more than a prophet."

"I say unto you, Among them that are born of women, there is none greater than John; yet he that is but little in the kingdom of God is greater than he."

We shall return to this passage. Mark now the generous appreciation, yet keen and delicate discrimination of Jesus, in thus speaking of John. We may learn here a lesson of how to treat our John the Baptists.

(To be continued.)

QUESTIONS.

1. What are the principal events in the history of John?
2. Why is it impossible that he should have been an Essene?
3. What was there peculiar about the year in which John began to preach? And what made it a good year in which to preach?
4. What was the character of John's preaching?

5. Through what region did John pass, preaching and baptizing?
6. Is it known now where Jesus was baptized? How far is it from Nazareth?
7. What qualities of mind does John show in his conversation with the deputation from Jerusalem?
8. What did the messengers mean by "that prophet"?
9. Why is John the evangelist's narrative likely to be correct?
10. In the conversation in John iii. what does John the Baptist mean by the expression, "A man can receive nothing except it be given him from heaven"?
11. What by the words, "My joy is fulfilled"?

12. Why did he use the comparison of a bridegroom and a wedding? (One office of the "friend of the bridegroom," or, as we should call him, the groomsman, was to present the bride to the bridegroom. The comparison of the kingdom of Israel with a bride is not uncommon in the Bible. Later the Church is called the bride of Christ.)

13. What difficulty has been found in the story of John's message to Jesus?

14. What prophet of the Old Testament has more passages supposed to refer to the Messiah than any other?

15. What expressions does Jesus use (quoting this prophet) in his answer to John?

THE BOOK AND MAGAZINE CLUB.

[Send all matter for this department to Mrs. J. B. Millet, 150 Charles Street, Boston, Mass.]

GENERAL INFORMATION FOR GIVERS AND RECEIVERS.

1. If you see a book offered in the Book Club which you desire to read, write directly to the address of the person who offers it. If she receives more than one request, the addresses of those to whom she cannot respond may be sent to the Book Club, and the request printed there.

2. If you have a book or paper to give or lend, write directly to the Book Club as above, and offer it with your address.

3. In sending a book, enclose, when possible, a P.O. card for response, already addressed.

4. In thanking the person who has sent

you a book, always mention the name of the book. Say, "I have received 'Black Beauty'" or whatever the book may be; not, "I have received *that book*." This saves a busy person a good deal of time. Otherwise, she must consult her list constantly to find out what book has been received safely.

N.B.—Do not send books to the Book Club. Send only the *offer* to the club. To send the *book* involves packing it *twice* and paying postage *twice*, where once would suffice.

Those who offer books frequently receive notes saying, "Shall I return you this book, or keep it, or pass it on?" *Unless otherwise stated, all books offered in this department are given, and the postage paid.*

OFFERS.

Will any mother who would like to have "Gentle Measures in Training the Young," by Jacob Abbott, or any one who would like "Black Beauty," address Miss Langmaid, 2 Gordon Terrace, Brookline, Massachusetts?

Mrs. William Nichols, 3 Webster Street, Allston, offers the *Household*, the *Unitarian*, and the *Christian Register* as they come out, also six bound volumes of the *Christian Examiner*.

A copy of "Romola" is offered by Miss Evelyn Wyman, 77 Lincoln Street, Worcester, Massachusetts.

The lady who offered scrap-books in the March number writes that she has completed a few more, some for invalids and others suitable for children. Applications for them will be forwarded by Mrs. J. B. Millet, 150 Charles Street, Boston, Massachusetts.

A year of the *Youth's Companion* is offered by Emma M. Butler, 20 Channing Street, Worcester, Massachusetts.

Olive Smith, Centre Moriches, New York, will send "David Copperfield," by Charles Dickens, to any one who would like it.

"Lady Audley's Secret" and "East Lynne" are offered by Mrs. E. Rowe, Melville, St. Landry Parish, Louisiana.

"Black Beauty" is offered by Lucy L. Lincoln, Hingham, Massachusetts.

Mrs. Wm. H. Sayward, 69 Monadnock Street, Dorchester, Massachusetts, offers

"Robert Elsmere," "Charles Auchester," "The Alhambra," "Black Beauty," and seven odd numbers of "Two Tales."

Miss Helen A. Ball, 43 Laurel Street, Worcester, Massachusetts, offers to loan "Young Folks' History of the United States," "Birds and Bees" and "Sharp Eyes," by Burroughs, "Succession of Forest Trees," by Thoreau, "A Marsh Island," by Sara O. Jewett, and "Primer of American Literature," by Richardson.

The *Christian Union* is offered by Mrs. Stephens, 1812 13th Street, N.W., Washington, District of Columbia.

Mrs. M. H. Totten, 1708 I Street, N.W., Washington, District of Columbia, offers the *Youth's Companion* and the Sunday issues of the *New York Sun* and *Tribune*.

Mrs. Eastman, 1905 N Street, N.W., Washington, District of Columbia, will send two Washington Sunday papers.

Mrs. Matthews, 1017 14th Street, N.W., Washington, District of Columbia, will send the *Forum* and the *Housekeeper*.

Mrs. F. W. Clark, 1612 Riggs Place, Washington, District of Columbia, offers the *Woman's Journal*."

I have a great number of *Babyhoods* which I offer to any one who wants them; also several numbers of the new magazine, *Childhood*. Address Mrs. W. S. Carter, Eliot Street, Jamaica Plain, Massachusetts.

(*Babyhood* is a magazine relating to the care and feeding of infants and young children,—very helpful to mothers.)

Miss Annie E. Howard, Melrose Highlands, Massachusetts, writes to the secretary as follows: "There are five girls in our Sunshine Club who would like names of other girls about their own ages (twelve to sixteen) with whom they could correspond and send papers. One has a *Youth's Companion* to dispose of. Of course, they must be children unable to provide themselves with papers. I think that with the one exception of the *Youth's Companion* the other papers that would be sent would be the *Every Other Sunday*. Now, can you give us any assistance in this way? The club is interested in its work, and I want to keep it up."

Mr. Henry C. Weston, the Uplands, Beverly Farms, Massachusetts, will give and

send the following books: "Two Years before the Mast," Dana; "Essays of Elia," Lamb; "Arabian Days' Entertainment," Curtis; Worcester's Dictionary; "Peck's Irish Friend," "The Great Hesper," "Twenty Thousand Leagues under the Sea," "Two Cities of Dunboy," "On the Scent," "Buried Diamonds," "In the Shires," "One Traveller returns," "Allan Quatermain"; "Union Speaker," Philbrick; "School History of the United States," Quackenbos; "Sanford and Merton"; "Rollo in Switzerland," "Rollo in Holland," "Rollo in Paris," Jacob Abbott; and the following novels: "Maiwa's Revenge," "King Solomon's Mines," "Nemesis," "Woman in White," "House on the Marsh," "Beforehand," "Allan's Wife," "Lament of Dives," "Passenger from Scotland Yard," "Miracle Gold," "King or Knave," "Lime Kiln Club."

I have all of last year's *Cheerful Letters* with the exception of one number. I will mail these to the address of any one desiring them. Sarah N. Page, 27 Everett Street, Cambridge, Massachusetts.

I will give and send four books published by Winsor & Newton, which would be helpful to any young student in painting, who is removed from an Art School or any one capable of giving instruction in painting. They are "The Art of Landscape Painting in Oil" and "Hints on Sketching from Nature." Address Miss M. E. French, Kenosha, Wisconsin.

Copies of "A History of the United States" are offered by Mrs. Henry P. Kidder, Milton, Massachusetts, and Mrs. F. E. Ballard, Lexington, Massachusetts. Mrs. Ballard also offers two or three years' of the *Chautauquan Magazine*.

A copy of the *Christian Register* as it comes out is offered by Mrs. George W. Collier, Cohasset, Massachusetts.

Every Other Sunday, as it comes out, is offered by the publishers. Address Miss Langmaid, 2 Gordon Terrace, Brookline, Massachusetts.

Miss Clarke regrets that she has no more copies of "Stepping Heavenward." This has proved a very popular book, and she hopes others will offer it. She desires also to explain that she often receives thanks for sending *The Cheerful Letter*, when, in fact, the paper is sent by some one else, and the thanks are undeserved by her.

REQUESTS.

Will members of the Cheerful Letter Exchange who go to remote places for their summer vacations kindly report to us the addresses of light-ships, forts, or charitable institutions unprovided with reading matter, where back numbers of magazines and papers would be welcome?

Please remember, when you see a request for a book in the Book Club, to write a card to Mrs. Millet, asking, "*Shall I send such a book to such a person?*" before sending it: else the person who requests it may receive several copies. When any one writes directly to you, asking for a book offered by you, send a card to Mrs. Millet, saying that you *have* sent it. When you receive more requests than you can meet, send these to the Book Club, to be printed there.

Will the clubs of young people who are willing to help us, including all circles, guilds, King's Daughters' Societies, Lend-a-hand Clubs, etc., please to read the note from the editor on the last page?

There has been an excellent little pamphlet prepared by Rev. G. W. Cooke, containing a plan for studying the life of Columbus and the early history of America. Would not some of our Cheerful Letter Exchange members like to give this to students and readers at a distance from books and libraries? To be obtained at 25 Beacon Street. Price 5 cents.

Some of the inmates of the almshouse have asked me for pictures and picture-books. Some there cannot read, and others not very intelligently; but they enjoy the pictures. If you do not think me asking for too much, send some pictures, if any on hand. Mrs. Phebe J. Ector, 619 Liberty Street, Winston, North Carolina.

(Would not this be a good place for *old* magazines?—Ed.)

Miss D. D. Dunlap, State Hospital, Tewksbury, Massachusetts, would like to receive illustrated reading about the Chicago Exposition.

I have sent my name to your secretary, thus, I hope, becoming a member of the Cheerful Letter Exchange. I have several magazines of "Trifet's Galaxy of Vocal and Instrumental Music," also song "Home of the Orange-tree," that I will give to any one

who wishes them. I would be very glad to get "Stepping Heavenward" and "The Divine Companion." Yours very respectfully, Mrs. A. H. Ravesies, Dade City, Pasco County, Florida.

Will you request reading, letters, and remembrances for a consumptive invalid, Ashley B. Warren, West Appleton, Maine? His home is with a widowed sister in Islesboro, Me.; but, being so poorly, he has been taken into the pine woods, where he is camping out. He is a Christian, and has been sick many years. Very poor. Can some one help to make these last months of his life more pleasant? He would like the books "Elect Lady" or "Sir Gibbie," by G. Macdonald, or any reading. Will you also send reading for a girl of eight years,—Addie Randlett, Islesboro, Maine,—a little niece of the sick man?

(*Every Other Sunday* is being sent.)

Can any one send me Hans Andersen's "Fairy Tales" or Æsop's Fables, a picture book or book of games for children, or a story of some good girl or boy which will be an ideal for an impressionable, imaginative young mind, or a book to assist a mother in teaching her child natural history? Mrs. Charlotte De Armond, Tefft, Jasper County, Indiana.

I should be very much pleased to receive (if possible) a copy of "Gates Ajar," by E. S. Phelps, and "Stepping Heavenward." Very truly yours, Mrs. Catherine Murray, Box 505, Guthrie, Oklahoma.

Miss Florence A. Langley, West Levant, Penobscot County, Maine, asks for "The Forsaken Inn," "The Scarlet Letter," or some of Rider Haggard's works. She would also like an illustrated paper, like the *New York Ledger*.

Mrs. Phebe J. Ector, 619 Liberty Street, Winston, North Carolina, who carries reading matter to the inmates of the prisons and almshouses in her neighborhood, writes that the following books have been asked for: "Bible and Modern Thought," Rev. T. B. Birks; "Bible Stories"; "Pilgrim's Progress"; "Child's Sabbath-day Book"; "Christians and the Theatre," Rev. J. M. Buckley; "Facts about Wives and Mothers," Rev. R. Dankersley; "How the Bible was made," Rev. E. M. Wood; "Little Foxes";

"Methodism and the Temperance Cause," any books, magazines, or papers on missionary work.

I think *The Cheerful Letter* the best publication of the kind ever started. But, since changing my address last September, I have not received it, and was too sick to write for it; but I prize the Sunday-school lessons so much! Would some one kindly send me the back numbers? I am now settled for the present, and think I may find plenty who would like reading matter. Would be so very glad of new or old *Harpers, Centuries, Arenas, Forums*, or any of that style of reading. If any see this who have sent me reading matter, let me thank them, and tell them how much I enjoyed it. High Point is a country village, of about two thousand five hundred inhabitants, very dry and healthy; but I feel so far from home and friends. If I do not acknowledge all books and papers, it is because I am not able to write letters. Mrs. Emma M. Backus, High Point, Guilford County, North Carolina.

(Back numbers of *The Cheerful Letter* and the *Century Magazine* for the year 1888 have been sent.)

LETTERS.

I have received two copies of *The Cheerful Letter*. I like them very much. I don't see how I have lived this long without them. There is so much good reading in them, it has cheered me up so much. I am an old lady, sixty-seven years old. I have been a cripple for five years. I can't do anything but knit. I have not been out of my room in two years. I get very lonely at times when I am not able to knit, and like to read very much. I would love to have some nice book or paper to read. Will some one be so kind as to send them to me? Many thanks to you. Your friend, Mrs. Sallie Smith, Pisgah, Jackson County, Alabama.

I have received the April and May numbers of *The Cheerful Letter*, and I thank the editor or whoever sent them to me. I have dwelt in the shadowy land of weariness and pain for nearly fifteen years, and I understand full well what a shut-in life means. My home is on a farm in the country, with a brother and two sisters: my parents have both "entered in" since I have been an invalid. One of the unsolved problems of my shut-in life is this: "How can one with

weak eyes, and a weak body racked with pain, earn a little money?" I am a member of the Shut-in-Society, and enjoy it more than I can tell. I have all the regular correspondents that I have means or strength to attend to; but, if any of you have one of the following books that you no longer care for, I will be delighted to receive it, and it will be loaned to many in my neighborhood. I would like to read "Faith Gartney's Girlhood," or any other of Mrs. Whitney's books; "A New England Girlhood," by Lucy Larcom; "Life and Letters of Louisa Alcott"; or "Looking back on Girlhood," by Pansy. I mention a number of books, thinking that among them all one may possibly be found for me. Address Miss C. A. Sheldon, Albion, Dene County, Wisconsin.

I think I would like to have anything to read that you can spare. Have you "Stepping Heavenward"? If so, would like it very much. State if you wish it returned or passed on to some other poor person. Also "Mary Marston," or some other one. I live nine miles from town, and cannot go out much. So I get very lonesome, as my children are all grown but two little ones, and gone, so my home is quite lonely. What does it cost to belong to the society or Book Club? Let me know. Wishing you success in your good work, and may God's blessing rest on you and all those who are trying to cheer the lonely hours of such like myself, and many, is the sincere wish of your honorable servant, Mrs. A. J. Witt, Portersville, Tulare County, California.

Through the kindness of a dear friend I receive *The Cheerful Letter* regularly, and wish to express my gratitude and tell you how I enjoy reading it; also, to give you to realize how much I thoroughly appreciate your kindness and the generous favors from our friends. I am a member of the Helping Hand Circle of King's Daughters, and our text is, "Not to be ministered unto, but to minister," and, while I receive so much pleasure, I desire to give a little to my sisters shut in, and to all the shut-ins who write to me, and tell me of their home surroundings and church connections, and cripples as well as invalids. I will gladly send good religious papers to each one. I have some very choice papers that I have received during the past winter, that ha

helped me over many rough places in the sick-room, and helped to make life worth living, while it drew my thoughts out of myself, and bade me look away to that home in the many mansions where we all desire to meet when our sufferings are over.

Fearing it will be rather too personal, I will omit calling the names of those who have so kindly remembered me with books from the Exchange; and, while I thanked them, I desire to show my gratitude to you all who are interested in publishing *The Cheerful Letter*. The many ways you have opened to the less favored class of people who need such helps as you give can surely be realized by you when you meet us in the home where no thought of separation enters the heart. Surely, your reward will be awaiting you, with many bright stars in your crown of rejoicing. I remain as ever your most grateful invalid and cripple shut-in, Mrs. E. C. Jenkison, 451 Broad St., Beloit, Wisconsin.

May I join your *Cheerful Letter Exchange*? I am an invalid, and have been fifteen years, so I feel as if I knew something of pain and loneliness. I have spinal disease and inflammation of the nerves. Have been confined to my bed, with no use of feet and limbs, nearly two years. I live in the country: it is pleasant to look out and see the sky, trees, grass, and all the wonderful works of nature. I do get so very lonely, for I am alone a good deal, and would be so glad if some of the readers of *The Cheerful Letter* would send me reading. I like religious reading of any kind and story-books and papers. No detective or ghost stories, please. My birthday is the 9th of July. Would your readers make me a party visit on that day, do you think? I would be so glad. Will answer all letters if material is sent me. I am poor, and cannot afford to write all I would like to unless I am helped.

Some one has sent me four *Cheerful Letters*. Please thank her for me. They come welcome. I am pleased to get them, and shall be so glad if they are sent me every month. I will also send reading to all who send stamps and tell me what they like, and, as far as I can, will gladly assist in any way all I can "In His Name." Sincerely yours, Miss Sadie V. Engell, Seward, New York, Box 134.

THE MOTHERS' COUNCIL.

WHAT SHALL WE PLAY TO-DAY?

Second Paper.

As the gifts of the kindergarten were designed as a means of education, it is difficult to separate the idea of instruction from them. But all children love a ball, and the first gift consists of balls made of soft materials, so that baby need not be hurt by them nor mirrors broken. I would have a ball for each child, and would choose first the primary colors, red, yellow, blue. Then, as I desired or could afford, I would add *dark* and *light* shades of these colors, for the sake of number and variety. Some of these might have strings attached, and the children would devise many ways of amusing themselves. A semi-quiet game could be played by putting one ball in the middle of the floor or table, and having the children to seat themselves at different distances, and each to try to hit it with another ball. The play might be accompanied by forfeits, prizes, and variations at the discretion of the mother. A valuable adjunct is the "color jar." The most fascinating, of course, is a jar of bright-colored crockery; but any receptacle would answer. The contents should be voluntary contributions, to remain the property of the jar, when once given, and should consist of *colored* objects, balls of all kinds, marbles, minerals, etc. The arranging, counting, and subdividing of these ought to occupy the little ones for many a half-hour. I think these delights might be reserved for Sunday, as the different materials would furnish subjects for quiet talks, and could be used to impart Biblical knowledge.

As the second gift, which is the keystone of Froebel's system, presupposes the guiding presence of mother or teacher to insure best results, I will only describe it briefly, and suggest one game. It consists of a small sphere, cylinder, and cube made of wood. The possibilities of this gift are almost infinite, its beauties inexhaustible. As the baby rolls the sphere, the cylinder also, but only in one way, and *tries* to roll the cube, just enumerate the experiences he is making his own, and you have one proof of this.

The game to which this gift lends itself is an adaptation of that ancient favorite, "hid-

ing the thimble." Here all three objects are placed in *conspicuous* hiding-places, and the players are supposed to find all three in silence before making any sign; and, after indicating success by raising the hand or some other preconcerted signal, they are to be seated and wait for the others. By limiting the time and enacting different rules, so dear to the childish heart, this may be made a very interesting game, and the children could play it entirely "by themselves."
Anna C. Breck.

MISCELLANEOUS.

EDITOR OF "CHEERFUL LETTER,"—Miss L. Freeman Clarke, Magnolia, Massachusetts.

SECRETARY OF CHEERFUL LETTER EXCHANGE,—Miss Bertha Langmaid, 2 Gordon Terrace, Brookline, Massachusetts.

TREASURER OF CHEERFUL LETTER EXCHANGE,—Miss Louise Howe, Nahant, Massachusetts.

SECRETARY OF BOOK CLUB OF CHEERFUL LETTER EXCHANGE,—Mrs. J. B. Millet, 150 Charles Street, Boston, Massachusetts.

Notice that requests for membership and for correspondents go to Miss Langmaid, our secretary; requests for books and offers of books, to Mrs. Millet; and to Miss Clarke only material for insertion in the paper (not Book-Club matter). All such material should be written on *one side only* of the paper, and sent by the first of the month *before* that in which it is printed.

Miss Clarke's address during the months of July, August, and September is Magnolia, Massachusetts, though letters addressed to her at Jamaica Plain will reach her in a few days.

Will all subscribers or receivers of *The Cheerful Letter*, whose copy does not come regularly, or comes not correctly addressed, be kind enough to notify Miss Bertha Langmaid, 2 Gordon Terrace, Brookline, Massachusetts?

Send also all notices of *changes of address* to Miss Langmaid. Please do not send these notices to the editor, as it causes delay in the correction.

Subscriptions may be sent during the summer to Miss Louise Howe, 25 Beacon

Street, Boston, or Nahant, Massachusetts. The subscription is 50 cents a year.

N.B.—It is only those whose subscription ends with May whose renewed subscription is due June 1. Subscriptions beginning *since* June, 1892, do not expire until twelve numbers have been received.

Those who desire to join the Cheerful Letter Exchange, whether to correspond with invalids, young mothers, and lonely people, or to send books, or to *receive* letters, books, etc., are requested to send their names to our secretary, Miss Langmaid. No fee is required for such membership.

Those not able to subscribe for the paper but desiring to receive it, may do so by writing to Miss Ellen R. Dewson, Quincy, Massachusetts. Please give full name and address. Many of our members take the paper, in order to send it to those who are not able to subscribe for it.

Will any minister who receives this paper assist us by sending to our secretary names of invalids, and of young people living in lonely places without libraries, schools, or means of education, and especially the addresses of the mothers of young families living on ranches or prairies?

One object of the Cheerful Letter Exchange is to send good books and magazines to those who are not able to obtain them, especially to young people,—not only stories and novels, but books that are instructive as well as interesting, and will create a taste for good reading, and gradually manifest interest the reader in studying history, the natural sciences, and so be an education. Also such books as are helpful to mothers, Jacob Abbott's wise and helpful books, advice about training children, and such a magazine as the *Mother's Nursery Guide*. We need the name of the minister who sends us such addresses as a voucher for the person being really in need of our help and interest. By procuring a list of names during the summer we shall be able in the autumn to distribute them among our members, and especially the clubs and circles of young people who are interested in Cheerful Letter Exchange work, guilds, Lending Hand Clubs, King's Daughters' Circles, etc. There is a cordial interest felt in this object by many of our young people living in cities, and an earnest desire to share their books and magazines with those who have but few.